Announcement of a package for NER

2282. SHRI INDRAMONI BORA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that she had two years back announced that there would be a package for North-Eastern Region;

(b) if so, the reason for delay in the announcement of the package;

(c) whether the same has been abandoned;

(d) if not, the total allocation of the budget package; and

(e) the details of the priorities?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING (SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ): (a) to (e) Government has approved, in principle, the implementation of a special package of schemes for improvement of Doordarshan and AIR services in North East Region (including Sikkim) and Island Territories. The package will be implemented in the 10th Five Year Plan and advance action has already been initiated. The size and nature of the schemes will depend upon the approval by the Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC). So far, the Expenditure Finance Committee has approved Rs. 8.15 crores during 2001-2002 from the Non-Lapsable Central Pool of Resources on the following schemes:—

(i) Rs. 7.15 crores on a pilot project for setting up of cable head ends in 20 villages in each of the 7 North-East States and Sikkim, totalling 160 villages.

(ii) Rs. 1.00 crore for software.